A M E N D M E N T S   to   the   C L A I M S

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application is provided below. The status of each claim is identified.

Claim 45 will be CANCELED by this Amendment.

1.   (ORIGINAL) A method for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

establishing an initial benefit for a coupon;

establishing a benefit variation condition for said coupon, said benefit variation condition having at least one associated qualifying action;

receiving notice of a completion of said at least one qualifying action; and

updating said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition.

2.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said qualifying action is associated with at least one of the following:

an initial recipient of said coupon;

a primary recipient of said coupon;

a secondary recipient of said coupon; and

a tertiary recipient of said coupon.

3.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said updated benefit of said coupon is associated with a first recipient of said coupon and said qualifying action is associated with a second recipient of said coupon.

4.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 3, wherein said second recipient is a downstream recipient of said first recipient.

5.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 3, further comprising:

providing an indication to said first recipient of a completion of said qualifying action by said second recipient.

6.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 3, wherein said qualifying action includes at least one of the following:

said second recipient registering said coupon;

said second recipient redeeming said coupon; or

said second recipient forwarding said coupon.

7.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 3, wherein said benefit variation condition has a second associated qualifying action.

8.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 7, wherein said second qualifying action includes at least one of the following:

said first recipient registering said coupon;

said first recipient redeeming said coupon; or

said first recipient forwarding said coupon.

9.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

establishing at least one validity duration condition for said coupon.

10.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 9, wherein said coupon has one of the following:

a finite duration; or

an infinite duration.

11.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said notice of a completion of said at least one qualifying action is considered to be received unless a notice is received that said qualifying action has not been completed.

12.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said benefit variation condition includes a validity duration condition for said coupon.

13.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a request to update said coupon's benefit.

14.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

notifying a recipient of said coupon after updating said benefit of said coupon.

15.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

providing an indication of said coupon's updated benefit.

16.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said coupon has an initial benefit greater than or equal to zero.

17.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said establishing a benefit variation condition associated with said coupon includes establishing a maximum benefit for said coupon.

18.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

issuing said coupon to at least one recipient.

19.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 18, further comprising:

including establishing a variable benefit to said coupon.

20.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said benefit variation conditions can cause said coupon's benefit to be adjusted upon said receiving notice of a completion of said at least one qualifying action.

21.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said qualifying action includes at least one of the following:

a first recipient of said coupon forwarding said coupon to a second recipient;

an initial recipient of said coupon receiving said coupon;

an initial recipient of said coupon registering said coupon;

an initial recipient of said coupon redeeming said coupon;

an initial recipient of said coupon forwarding said coupon;

a primary recipient of said coupon receiving said coupon;

a primary recipient of said coupon registering said coupon;

a primary recipient of said coupon redeeming said coupon;

a primary recipient of said coupon forwarding said coupon;

a secondary recipient of said coupon receiving said coupon;

a secondary recipient of said coupon registering said coupon;

a secondary recipient of said coupon redeeming said coupon;

a secondary recipient of said coupon forwarding said coupon;

a tertiary recipient of said coupon receiving said coupon;

a tertiary recipient of said coupon registering said coupon;

a tertiary recipient of said coupon redeeming said coupon;

a tertiary recipient of said coupon forwarding said coupon;

a recipient of said coupon registering said coupon; or

a recipient of said coupon redeeming said coupon.

22.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

establishing an initial benefit for said coupon.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

23. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

modifying said benefit variation condition.

24. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said qualifying action includes a recipient of said coupon redeeming said coupon within a predetermined time period.

25. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 24, wherein said coupon's benefit changes a first amount if said recipient of said coupon redeems said coupon within said predetermined time period.

26. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 25, wherein said coupon's benefit changes a second amount if said recipient of said coupon redeems said coupon after said predetermined time period.

27. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 26, wherein said second amount is less than said first amount.

28. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 24, wherein said coupon's benefit changes a first amount if said recipient of said coupon registers said coupon within said predetermined time period.

29. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 28, wherein said coupon's benefit changes a second amount if said recipient of said coupon registers said coupon after said predetermined time period.

30. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

tracking recipients of said coupon.

31. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

tracking dissemination of said coupon.

32. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

tracking at least one hierarchy of recipients of said coupon.

33. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

creating a hierarchy of recipients of said coupon.

34. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said coupon's benefit increases a first amount if an initial recipient of said coupon forwards said coupon to a primary recipient.

35. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 34, where said coupon's benefit increases a second amount if said primary recipient of said coupon forwards said coupon to a secondary recipient.

36. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 35, wherein said second amount is less than or equal to said first amount.

37. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 35, where said coupon's benefit increases a third amount if said secondary recipient of said coupon forwards said coupon to a tertiary recipient.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

38.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 37, wherein said third amount is less than or equal to said second amount.

39.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said benefit variation condition includes establishing a maximum benefit for said coupon.

40.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said benefit variation condition associated with said coupon includes a recipient variable benefit assigned to a redeemer of said coupon.

41.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said establishing a benefit variation condition associated with said coupon includes establishing at least one recipient variable benefit for a recipient of said coupon.

42.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
        crediting a financial account associated with a recipient of said coupon if said coupon's benefit increases after said recipient has redeemed said coupon.

43.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
        issuing a new coupon to a recipient of said coupon if said coupon's benefit increases after said recipient has redeemed said coupon.

44.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
        monitoring at least one of a number of recipients receiving said coupon, registering said coupon, or redeeming said coupon.

45.   (CANCELED) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

modifying said benefit variation condition.

46.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said initial benefit is associated with a recipient of said coupon.

47.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein said initial benefit is based upon at least one of the following:

a status of a recipient of said coupon;

a coupon registration history of a recipient of said coupon;

a coupon redemption history of a recipient of said coupon; and

a personal preference of a recipient of said coupon.

48.   (ORIGINAL) A method for varying a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

associating an initial benefit with a coupon;

establishing a first qualifying action associated with said coupon; and

changing said coupon's associated benefit a first amount upon receiving notice of a completion of said first qualifying action.

49.   (ORIGINAL) The method of 48, further comprising:

providing said coupon to at least one initial recipient.

50.   (ORIGINAL) The method of 49, wherein said first qualifying action includes forwarding of said coupon by said initial recipient to a primary recipient.

51.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 50, further comprising:

establishing a second qualifying action associated with said coupon.

52.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 51, further comprising:

changing said coupon's associated benefit a second amount upon

receiving notice of a completion of said second qualifying action.

53.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 51, wherein said second

qualifying action includes forwarding of said coupon by said primary recipient to a

secondary recipient.

54.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 49, wherein said first qualifying

action includes a primary recipient receiving said coupon from said initial

recipient.

55.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 48, further comprising:

crediting a financial account associated with a recipient of said

coupon if said benefit of said coupon increases after said recipient has

redeemed said coupon.

56.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 48, further comprising at least one

of the following:

issuing a new coupon to a recipient of said coupon if said benefit of

said coupon increases after said recipient has redeemed said coupon; and

notifying a recipient of said coupon of a change in benefit of said

coupon.

-11-

57.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 48, wherein said notice of a completion of said first qualifying action is considered to be received unless a notice is received that said qualifying action has not been completed.

58.   (ORIGINAL) A method for changing a coupon's benefit, comprising:

associating a first qualifying action with a coupon, whereby a benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said first qualifying action by a first recipient of said coupon; and

changing said benefit of said coupon upon receipt of an indication of completion of said first qualifying action by said first recipient.

59.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, further comprising at least one of the following:

associating an initial benefit with said coupon; and

associating said coupon with a recipient.

60.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, wherein said notice of completion of said first qualifying action is considered to be received unless a notice is received that said qualifying action has not been completed.

61.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, wherein said first qualifying action includes registration of said coupon by said first recipient.

62.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, wherein said first qualifying action includes redemption of said coupon by said first recipient.

63. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, wherein said first qualifying action includes forwarding of said coupon by said first recipient to a second recipient.

64. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, wherein said first qualifying action includes registration of said coupon by a second recipient, said second recipient receiving said coupon from said first recipient.

65. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, wherein said first qualifying action includes redemption of said coupon by a second recipient, said second recipient receiving said coupon from said first recipient.

66. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, wherein said first qualifying action includes a second recipient receiving said coupon from said first recipient.

67. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 58, further comprising:

      associating a second qualifying action with a coupon, whereby said benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said second qualifying action by a second recipient of said coupon.

68. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 67, wherein said second qualifying action includes said second recipient forwarding said coupon to a third recipient.

69.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 67, wherein said second qualifying action includes a third recipient receiving said coupon from said second recipient.

70.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, further comprising:
        establishing a recipient variable benefit associated with said first recipient.

71.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, further comprising:
crediting a financial account associated with said first recipient if said benefit of said coupon increases after said first recipient has redeemed said coupon.

72.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, further comprising:
        issuing a new coupon to said first recipient of said coupon if said benefit of said coupon increases after said first recipient has redeemed said coupon.

73.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, further comprising:
        notifying a recipient of said coupon of a change in benefit of said coupon.

74.   (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 58, further comprising:
        notifying a recipient of said coupon after updating said benefit of said coupon.

75.   (WITHDRAWN) A method for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

generating a coupon having a variable benefit;

receiving an indication that a first recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from a second recipient after said second recipient has redeemed said coupon; and

issuing a new coupon to said second recipient, the new coupon having a benefit corresponding to an incremental benefit said second recipient would have received had said coupon not been redeemed by said second recipient.

76.   (WITHDRAWN) A method for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

generating a coupon having a variable benefit;

receiving an indication that a first recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from a second recipient after said second recipient has redeemed said coupon; and

crediting to a financial account associated with said second recipient an incremental benefit said second recipient would have received had said coupon not been redeemed by said second recipient.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

77.   (WITHDRAWN) A method for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

issuing a coupon having a variable benefit to a first recipient;

receiving an indication after a second recipient registers a duplicate of said coupon; and

increasing a benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient after said indication is received.

78.   (WITHDRAWN) A method for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

issuing a coupon having a variable benefit to a first recipient;

receiving an indication after a second recipient redeems a duplicate of said coupon; and

increasing a benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient after said indication is received.

79.   (WITHDRAWN) A method for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

issuing a coupon having a variable benefit to a first recipient;

receiving an indication after a second recipient completes a qualifying action; and

increasing a benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient after said indication is received.

80.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 79, wherein said qualifying
action includes at least one of the following:

said second recipient receiving said coupon;

said second recipient registering said coupon;

said second recipient redeeming said coupon; or

said second recipient forwarding said coupon.

81.   (WITHDRAWN) A coupon issuing system, comprising:

a controller;

a storage device coupled to said controller; and

software operative to run on said controller to increase a benefit of a
coupon in accordance with at least one benefit variation condition.

82.   (WITHDRAWN) A coupon issuing system, comprising:

a controller;

a storage device coupled to said controller; and

software operative to run on said controller to increase a benefit of a
coupon retained by a first recipient when an indication is received that a
second recipient has registered a duplicate of said coupon received from said
first recipient.

-17-

83.   (WITHDRAWN) A coupon issuing system, comprising:

a controller;

a storage device coupled to said controller; and

software operative to run on said controller to increase a benefit of a coupon retained by a first recipient when an indication is received that a second recipient has redeemed a duplicate of said coupon received from said first recipient.

84.   (WITHDRAWN) A coupon issuing system, comprising:

a controller;

a storage device coupled to said controller; and

software operative to run on said controller to increase a benefit of a coupon in accordance with benefit variation conditions.

85.   (WITHDRAWN) A coupon issuing system, comprising:

a controller;

a storage device coupled to said controller; and

software operative to run on said controller to increase a benefit of a coupon upon completion of a qualifying action by a recipient of said coupon.

86.   (WITHDRAWN) A method for changing a benefit for a coupon, comprising:

establishing benefit variation conditions for a coupon;

receiving a request to redeem said coupon; and

updating said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation conditions.

-18-

87.   (ORIGINAL) A method for changing a benefit for a coupon, comprising:

establishing benefit variation conditions for a coupon, said benefit variation condition including a qualifying action;

determining if said benefit variation conditions for said coupon needs to be modified;

receiving a notice of a completion of said qualifying action; and

updating said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation conditions.

88.   (WITHDRAWN) A coupon, comprising:

a portion of material having indicia representative of at least one qualifying action and a benefit associated with a coupon.

89.   (WITHDRAWN) The coupon of claim 88, further comprising indicia representative of a coupon identifier for said coupon.

90.   (WITHDRAWN) A coupon, comprising:

a portion of material having indicia representative of a benefit associated with a coupon and a benefit variation condition associated with said coupon.

91.　(WITHDRAWN) A coupon, comprising:

a portion of material having indicia representative of a benefit associated with a coupon and at least one qualifying action associated with said coupon.

92.　(WITHDRAWN) An electronic coupon, comprising:

an electronic signal representative of a benefit associated with a coupon and a benefit variation condition associated with said coupon.

93.　(WITHDRAWN) An electronic coupon, comprising:

an electronic signal representative of a benefit associated a coupon and at least one qualifying action associated with said coupon.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

94.   (ORIGINAL) A system for changing a benefit for a coupon, comprising:

a memory;

a communication port; and

a processor connected to said memory and said communication port, said processor being operative to:

establish an initial benefit for a coupon;

establish a benefit variation condition associated with said coupon, said benefit variation condition having at least one associated qualifying action;

receive notice of a completion of said at least one qualifying action; and

update said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition.

95.   (ORIGINAL) A system for varying a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

a memory;

a communication port; and

a processor connected to said memory and said communication port, said processor being operative to:

associate an initial benefit with a coupon;

establish a first qualifying action associated with said coupon; and

change said coupon's associated benefit a first amount upon receiving notice of a completion of said first qualifying action.

96.   (WITHDRAWN) A method for changing a benefit for a coupon, comprising:

establishing an initial benefit for a coupon;

establishing a benefit variation condition for said coupon; and

updating said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition.

97.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, wherein said benefit variation condition includes at least one qualifying action.

98.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 97, further comprising:

receiving an indication of a completion of said qualifying action.

99.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 97, wherein said qualifying action includes at least one of the following:

a first recipient of said coupon forwarding said coupon to a second recipient;

an initial recipient receiving said coupon;

a primary recipient receiving said coupon;

a secondary recipient receiving said coupon;

a tertiary recipient receiving said coupon;

a recipient of said coupon registering said coupon; or

a recipient of said coupon redeeming said coupon.

100. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, wherein said benefit variation condition includes at least one validity duration condition for said coupon.

101. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, further comprising:

receiving a request to update said coupon's benefit.

102. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, further comprising:

providing an indication of said coupon's updated benefit.

103. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, wherein said establishing a benefit variation condition associated with said coupon includes establishing a maximum benefit for said coupon.

104. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, further comprising:

issuing said coupon to at least one recipient.

105. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, further comprising:

tracking recipients of said coupon.

106. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 96, further comprising:

tracking at least one hierarchy of recipients of said coupon.

107. (WITHDRAWN) A method for changing a coupon benefit, comprising:

receiving a coupon having an associated benefit and at least one associated qualifying action;

performing said qualifying action; and

receiving an indication of a change in said benefit associated with said coupon.

108. (WITHDRAWN) A method for changing a coupon benefit, comprising:

receiving a coupon having an associated initial benefit and at least one associated qualifying action;

causing a completion of said qualifying action; and

receiving an indication of a change in said benefit associated with said coupon.

109. (WITHDRAWN) A method for redeeming a coupon, comprising:

receiving a variable benefit coupon for redemption;

requesting a determination of a benefit associated with said variable benefit coupon;

receiving an indication of said benefit associated with said variable benefit coupon; and

allowing said variable benefit coupon to be redeemed for said indicated benefit.

110. (WITHDRAWN) A method for redeeming a coupon, comprising:

receiving a request to redeem a variable benefit coupon;

requesting a determination of a benefit associated with said variable benefit coupon;

receiving an indication of said benefit associated with said variable benefit coupon; and

allowing said variable benefit coupon to be redeemed for said indicated benefit.

111. (WITHDRAWN) A method for redeeming a coupon, comprising:

receiving a request to redeem a variable benefit coupon;

providing a notice of a receipt of said request;

receiving an indication of a benefit associated with said variable benefit coupon; and

allowing said variable benefit coupon to be redeemed for said indicated benefit.

112. (WITHDRAWN) A method of using a computer system for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

generating a coupon having a variable benefit, wherein a duplicate of said coupon is transmitted to a first recipient from a second recipient;

receiving an indication that at least one of said second recipient or said first recipient has completed a qualifying action; and

changing a benefit of said coupon retained by said second recipient after said indication is received.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

113. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 112, further comprising:

determining whether said second recipient received a duplicate of the coupon from a third recipient, said third recipient retaining a respective benefit of said coupon; and

changing the benefit of said third recipient's coupon after said second recipient has received the duplicate of said coupon from said third recipient.

114. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 112, further comprising:

determining at least one prior recipient that has indirectly forwarded a duplicate of said coupon to the said first recipient, the at least one recipient has a respective benefit of the coupon; and

changing the benefit of the coupon of each prior recipient that has indirectly forwarded the duplicate of the coupon to the first recipient.

115. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 114, wherein changing the benefit of each prior recipient comprises:

changing, for each prior recipient, the benefit of said coupon by an amount that is based on a number of intervening recipients between the at least one prior recipient and said first recipient.

116. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 114, further comprising:

adjusting, for each at least one prior recipient, said coupon's benefit to equal a predetermined maximum benefit if the coupon's benefit exceeds the predetermined maximum benefit.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

117. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 112, further comprising:

assigning an initial benefit to the duplicate of the coupon received by the first recipient.

118. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 117, further comprising:

receiving a forward indication when said first recipient has forwarded a duplicate of said coupon to a new recipient;

changing the benefit of said coupon retained by said second recipient when said forward indication is received; and

changing the initial benefit of said coupon retained by the first recipient to obtain a first recipient benefit when said forward indication is received.

119. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 112, further comprising:

arranging said first recipient and said second recipient in a hierarchy, said hierarchy having the first recipient at an immediate lower level than said second recipient;

determining a number of levels lower than said immediate lower level of said second recipient in said hierarchy, wherein each of said number of levels has at least one downstream recipient with a benefit of said coupon, and wherein the duplicate of said coupon is forwarded from said first recipient via each downstream recipient; and

changing the respective benefit of said coupon retained by each downstream recipient as the duplicate of said coupon is forwarded to descending levels in the hierarchy.

120.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 119, wherein said changing the respective benefit of said coupon of each downstream recipient comprises:

changing the respective benefit of the coupon retained by each downstream recipient by an amount based on a position of each respective downstream recipient in said hierarchy relative to at least one upstream recipient in said hierarchy.

121.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 119, further comprising:

arranging an initial recipient to whom said coupon is initially received at a topmost level of said hierarchy, said hierarchy having no more than a predetermined number of levels below the topmost level.

122. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 119, further comprising:

determining a primary number of primary downstream recipients having completed a primary required activity, each of said primary downstream recipients receiving said coupon from said first recipient;

multiplying the primary number by a primary recipient increase benefit to obtain a primary recipient total benefit;

determining a secondary number of secondary downstream recipients having completed a secondary required activity, each of said secondary downstream recipients receiving the duplicate of said coupon from at least one of said primary downstream recipients;

multiplying the secondary number by a secondary recipient increase benefit to obtain a secondary recipient total benefit;

determining a tertiary number of tertiary downstream recipients having completed a tertiary required activity, each of said tertiary downstream recipients receiving the duplicate of said coupon from at least one of said secondary downstream recipients;

multiplying the tertiary number by a tertiary recipient increase benefit to obtain a tertiary recipient total benefit; and

updating a first benefit of said coupon of said first recipient, wherein the updated first benefit is proportional to a sum of said primary, secondary and tertiary recipient total benefits.

123. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 122, wherein the primary required activity, the secondary required activity and the tertiary required activity include at least one of forwarding the coupon to a downstream recipient, registering said coupon, and redeeming the coupon.

124. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 112, further comprising:

arranging said first recipient and said second recipient in a hierarchy, said hierarchy having a plurality of levels wherein said second recipient is at a level in said hierarchy that is immediately higher than a level of said first recipient;

determining a number of levels in said hierarchy that are higher than the level of said second recipient, wherein when said number of levels exceeds one, each of said number of levels in said hierarchy has a prior recipient having a respective benefit of said coupon; and

changing the respective benefit of said coupon retained by each prior recipient.

125. (WITHDRAWN) A method of using a computer system for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

issuing a coupon having a variable benefit to an initial recipient;

receiving an indication after a new recipient receives a duplicate of said coupon issued to said initial recipient of the coupon; and

changing a benefit of said coupon retained by said initial recipient each time said indication is received.

126. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 125, wherein said changing a benefit of said coupon retained by the initial recipient each time said indication is received comprises:

determining after said indication is received whether said new recipient has previously received said coupon; and

changing the benefit of said coupon retained by the initial recipient if said new recipient has not previously received said coupon.

127. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 125, wherein said changing comprises:

changing the benefit of said coupon retained by the initial recipient by an amount based on a number of intervening recipients between said new recipient and said initial recipient.

128. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 125, further comprising:

assigning an initial benefit to said coupon received by a first new recipient;

receiving a forward indication when said first new recipient has forwarded a duplicate of said coupon to a second new recipient;

changing, after said forward indication is received, said initial benefit of said coupon retained by said first new recipient to obtain a first new recipient benefit; and

changing the benefit of said coupon retained by the initial recipient after said forward indication is received.

129.   (WITHDRAWN) A method of using a computer system for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

generating a coupon having a variable benefit;

receiving an indication that a first recipient has redeemed a duplicate of said coupon received from a second recipient of said coupon; and

changing a benefit of said coupon retained by said second recipient after said indication is received.

130.   (WITHDRAWN) A method of using a computer system for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

generating a coupon having a variable benefit;

changing a benefit of said coupon retained by a first recipient each time an indication is received that a new recipient has registered to receive a duplicate of said coupon issued to said first recipient; and

issuing said coupon to the new recipient.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

131. (WITHDRAWN) A method of using a computer system for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

(a) issuing a coupon having a variable benefit to a first recipient;

(b) receiving a first forward indication that said first recipient has forwarded a duplicate of the coupon to a new recipient;

(c) determining whether said new recipient has previously received said coupon;

(d) changing the benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient when said new recipient has not previously received said coupon;

(e) receiving a second forward indication that said new recipient has forwarded a duplicate of said coupon to a subsequent recipient;

(f) determining whether said subsequent recipient has previously received a duplicate of said coupon;

(g) changing the benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient when said subsequent recipient has not previously received said coupon; and

(h) changing a new benefit of said coupon retained by said new recipient when said subsequent recipient has not previously received said coupon.

132. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 131, further comprising:

repeating (b) through (d) each time said first forward indication is received; and

repeating (e) through (h) each time said second forward indication is received.

133. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 131, wherein said changing the benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient when said new recipient has not previously received said coupon comprises;

determining whether a number of said new recipients that have not previously received said coupon exceeds a maximum number; and

adjusting said benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient to equal a predetermined maximum benefit corresponding to said number if the benefit exceeds said predetermined maximum benefit.

134. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 131, wherein said changing a new benefit of said coupon retained by said new recipient when said subsequent recipient has not previously received said coupon comprises:

determining whether a number of subsequent recipients that have not previously received said coupon exceeds a maximum number; and

adjusting the benefit of said coupon retained by said new recipient to equal a predetermined maximum benefit corresponding to said number if the benefit exceeds said predetermined maximum benefit.

135. (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 131, further comprising:

updating the benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient, wherein the benefit corresponds to a sum of an initial benefit of said coupon and an amount by which said initial benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient has been increased.

136. (WITHDRAWN) An apparatus for providing a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

a server coupled to at least one output device for issuing a coupon having a variable benefit to a first recipient, wherein said server is operable to increase a benefit of said coupon retained by said first recipient when an indication is received that a second recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from said first recipient.

137. (WITHDRAWN) A coupon issuing system, comprising:
a controller;

a storage device coupled to said controller; and

software operative to run on said controller to increase a benefit of a coupon retained by a first recipient when an indication is received that a second recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from said first recipient.

issuing a coupon having a variable benefit, wherein a duplicate of the coupon is transmitted from one recipient to another recipient;

receiving an indication that a first recipient has received the duplicate of the coupon from a second recipient of the coupon; and

changing the benefit of the coupon retained by the second recipient when the indication is received.

138.   (WITHDRAWN) A method of using a computer system for redeeming a coupon having a variable benefit, comprising:

   receiving a coupon identifier of a coupon;

   receiving a recipient identifier corresponding to a recipient of the coupon;

   determining a benefit of said coupon corresponding to said recipient identifier; and

   processing a request to redeem said coupon using said benefit.

139.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 138, further comprising the step of:

   verifying the validity of said coupon.

140.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 138, wherein said determining a benefit of said coupon comprises:

   accessing a database storing information related to said coupon; and

   retrieving the redemption benefit of said coupon corresponding to said recipient identifier from said database.

141.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 138, wherein said determining the benefit of said coupon comprises:

   accessing a web site storing information related to said coupon; and

   retrieving the benefit of said coupon corresponding to said recipient identifier from said web site.

-36-

142.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 139, wherein said processing said request comprises:

applying the benefit to a purchase price of an item corresponding to said coupon.

143.   (WITHDRAWN) The method of claim 139, wherein said determining the benefit of said coupon comprises determining a benefit of said coupon in accordance with benefit variation conditions.

144.   (ORIGINAL) A computer readable medium for use in a coupon system, the computer readable medium storing a computer program comprising:

computer readable means for creating an initial benefit for a coupon;

computer readable means for creating a benefit variation condition for said coupon, said benefit variation condition having at least one associated qualifying action;

computer readable means for receiving notice of a completion of said at least one qualifying action; and

computer readable means for changing said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

145. (ORIGINAL) An article of manufacture, comprising:

a computer usable medium having a computer readable program means embodied therein for operating an information system, the computer readable program means in said article of manufacture operable to:

establish an initial benefit for a coupon;

establish a benefit variation condition for said coupon, said benefit variation condition having at least one associated qualifying action;

receive notice of a completion of said at least one qualifying action; and

update said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition.

146. (ORIGINAL) An apparatus for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

means for creating an initial benefit for a coupon;

means for creating a benefit variation condition for said coupon, said benefit variation condition having at least one associated qualifying action;

means for receiving notice of a completion of said at least one qualifying action; and

means for changing said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition.

147.   (ORIGINAL) A computer readable medium for use in a coupon system, the computer readable medium storing a computer program comprising:

computer readable means for associating an initial benefit with a coupon;

computer readable means for associating a first qualifying action with said coupon; and

computer readable means for changing said coupon's associated benefit a first amount upon receiving notice of a completion of said first qualifying action.

148.   (ORIGINAL) An article of manufacture, comprising:

a computer usable medium having a computer readable program means embodied therein for operating an information system, the computer readable program means in said article of manufacture operable to:

associate an initial benefit with a coupon;

establish a first qualifying action associated with said coupon; and

change said coupon's associated benefit a first amount upon receiving notice of a completion of said first qualifying action.

149.   (ORIGINAL) An apparatus for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

means for associating an initial benefit with a coupon;

means for creating a first qualifying action associated with said coupon; and

means for modifying said coupon's associated benefit a first amount upon receiving notice of a completion of said first qualifying action.

150. (ORIGINAL) A system for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

a memory;

a communication port; and

a processor connected to said memory and said communication port, said processor being operative to:

associate a first qualifying action with a coupon, whereby a benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said first qualifying action by a first recipient of said coupon; and

change said benefit of said coupon upon receipt of an indication of completion of said first qualifying action by said first recipient.

151. (ORIGINAL) A computer readable medium for use in a coupon system, the computer readable medium storing a computer program comprising:

computer readable means for creating a first qualifying action associated with a coupon, whereby a benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said first qualifying action by a first recipient of said coupon; and

computer readable means for modifying said benefit of said coupon upon receipt of an indication of completion of said first qualifying action by said first recipient.

152. (ORIGINAL) An article of manufacture, comprising:

a computer usable medium having a computer readable program means embodied therein for operating an information system, the computer readable program means in said article of manufacture operable to:

associate a first qualifying action with a coupon, whereby a benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said first qualifying action by a first recipient of said coupon; and

change said benefit of said coupon upon receipt of an indication of completion of said first qualifying action by said first recipient.

153. (ORIGINAL) An apparatus for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

means for establishing a first qualifying action associated with a coupon, whereby a benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said first qualifying action by a first recipient of said coupon; and

means for modifying said benefit of said coupon upon receipt of an indication of completion of said first qualifying action by said first recipient.

-41-

154. (WITHDRAWN) A system for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

a memory;

a communication port; and

a processor connected to said memory and said communication port, said processor being operative to:

generate a coupon having a variable benefit;

receive an indication that a first recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from a second recipient after said second recipient has redeemed said coupon; and

issue a new coupon to said second recipient, the new coupon having a benefit corresponding to an incremental benefit said second recipient would have received had said coupon not been redeemed by said second recipient.

155. (WITHDRAWN) A computer readable medium for use in a coupon system, the computer readable medium storing a computer program comprising:

computer readable means for creating a coupon having a variable benefit;

computer readable means for receiving an indication that a first recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from a second recipient after said second recipient has redeemed said coupon; and

computer readable means for providing a new coupon to said second recipient, the new coupon having a benefit corresponding to an incremental benefit said second recipient would have received had said coupon not been redeemed by said second recipient.

156. (WITHDRAWN) An article of manufacture, comprising:

a computer usable medium having a computer readable program means embodied therein for operating an information system, the computer readable program means in said article of manufacture operable to:

generate a coupon having a variable benefit;

receive an indication that a first recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from a second recipient after said second recipient has redeemed said coupon; and

issue a new coupon to said second recipient, the new coupon having a benefit corresponding to an incremental benefit said second recipient would have received had said coupon not been redeemed by said second recipient.

157. (WITHDRAWN) An apparatus for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

means for creating a coupon having a variable benefit;

means for receiving an indication that a first recipient has received a duplicate of said coupon from a second recipient after said second recipient has redeemed said coupon; and

means for providing a new coupon to said second recipient, the new coupon having a benefit corresponding to an incremental benefit said second recipient would have received had said coupon not been redeemed by said second recipient.

158. (WITHDRAWN) A system for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

a memory;

a communication port; and

a processor connected to said memory and said communication port, said processor being operative to:

generate a coupon having a variable benefit, wherein a duplicate of said coupon is transmitted to a first recipient from a second recipient;

receive an indication that at least one of said second recipient or said first recipient has completed a qualifying action; and

change a benefit of said coupon retained by said second recipient after said indication is received.

-44-

159. (WITHDRAWN) A computer readable medium for use in a coupon system, the computer readable medium storing a computer program comprising:

computer readable means for creating a coupon having a variable benefit, wherein a duplicate of said coupon is transmitted to a first recipient from a second recipient;

computer readable means for receiving an indication that at least one of said second recipient or said first recipient has completed a qualifying action; and

computer readable means for modifying a benefit of said coupon retained by said second recipient after said indication is received.

160. (WITHDRAWN) An article of manufacture, comprising:

a computer usable medium having a computer readable program means embodied therein for operating an information system, the computer readable program means in said article of manufacture operable to:

generate a coupon having a variable benefit, wherein a duplicate of said coupon is transmitted to a first recipient from a second recipient;

receive an indication that at least one of said second recipient or said first recipient has completed a qualifying action; and

change a benefit of said coupon retained by said second recipient after said indication is received.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

161.   (WITHDRAWN) An apparatus for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

means for creating a coupon having a variable benefit, wherein a duplicate of said coupon is transmitted to a first recipient from a second recipient;

means for receiving an indication that at least one of said second recipient or said first recipient has completed a qualifying action; and

means for modifying a benefit of said coupon retained by said second recipient after said indication is received.

162.   (ORIGINAL) A method for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

establishing an initial benefit for a coupon;

establishing a benefit variation condition for said coupon, said benefit variation condition having at least one associated qualifying action; and

updating said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition unless a notice is received that said at least one qualifying action has not been completed.

163.   (ORIGINAL) A method for changing a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

establishing an initial benefit for a coupon;

establishing a benefit variation condition for said coupon, said benefit variation condition having at least one associated qualifying action; and

updating said coupon's benefit in accordance with said benefit variation condition unless a determination is made that said at least one qualifying action has not been completed.

164.   (ORIGINAL) A method for varying a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

associating an initial benefit with a coupon;

establishing a first qualifying action associated with said coupon; and

changing said coupon's associated benefit a first amount unless a notice is received that said first qualifying action has not been completed.

165.   (ORIGINAL) A method for varying a benefit associated with a coupon, comprising:

associating an initial benefit with a coupon;

establishing a first qualifying action associated with said coupon; and

changing said coupon's associated benefit a first amount unless a determination is made that said first qualifying action has not been completed.

99-032 AM 06.25.04

166. (ORIGINAL) A method for changing a coupon's benefit, comprising:

associating a first qualifying action with a coupon, whereby a benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said first qualifying action by a first recipient of said coupon; and

changing said benefit of said coupon unless a notice is received that said first qualifying action has not been completed.

167. (ORIGINAL) A method for changing a coupon's benefit, comprising:

associating a first qualifying action with a coupon, whereby a benefit for said coupon changes upon completion of said first qualifying action by a first recipient of said coupon; and

changing said benefit of said coupon unless a determination is made that said first qualifying action has not been completed.